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AUTHOR Clements, Kathleen
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ABSTRACT

There is a dearth of information about the emotional characteristics of mature women who are returning to colleges in increasing numbers. Characteristics of older women were compared to younger women in teacher preparation courses at a major state university. The older women's attitudes were less positive toward peers, parents and their own social attractiveness but were more positive toward work and education. On personality measures, the older women were less anxious, depressed and hostile than the younger women. Within the older group, attitude toward work was positively correlated with age, while anxiety, depression and hostility were negatively correlated. The older women were more effective academically and had achieved more emotional equanimity and competency than their younger counterparts. (Author)

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Kathleen Clements

Eastfield College

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EMOTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MATURE WOMEN STUDENTS IN EDUCATION

Kathleen Clements
Eastfield College
Dallas County Community College District

Since little research exists on the personality characteristics of mature women college students, this study was undertaken to explore some of their baseline characteristics. Older women are enrolling in higher education in ever increasing numbers (Handbook of Women Workers, 1969), but neither research nor personality theory offers firm bases for academic guidance, personal counseling, classroom instruction, or either encouragement or discouragement of these students from an emotional perspective.

Personality theorists have either ignored adult personality or treated it in broad terms as a period of little change. Researchers have explored childhood and adolescence at length, have begun the study of aging, but have largely ignored the middle years of life. Until the impact of the women's liberation movement caused a painful reevaluation of theories about women's psychological development, Erikson's (1964) theories of inner space were the only formulations which had made any impact against the Freudian interpretations domination of both professional and popular imaginations. Bischof (1969) attempted to collate and synthesize research of adult attributes and development and found the results conflicting and not ready for synthesis. Bardwick (1971) accumulated most of the worthwhile

research on women and attempted a meaningful synthesis but acknowledged the many gaps in research.

Beginning with Master's thesis research in 1965, this investigator found females underused as research subjects. Much the same state of affairs existed as recently as a year or two ago.

> In psychological research, woman's position is one of benign neglect. . . . Schwabacher, of Antioch College, reviewed all 1970 and two 1971 issues of the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. . . she reported an overuse of men both numerically and in terms of 'forming and testing general psychological theories and models' (Psychology Today, January, 1973, p. 14).

She further found that thirty percent of the studies used all male subjects; in less than half of the studies using both sexes did the authors check for sex differences; in seventy-three percent of those studies checked for sex differences, differences were found (italics mine). When authors using only male subjects were asked why, they said it was due to men's greater availability as subjects. Women were sometimes pretested, sex differences were found, and then the women were excluded from the final study.

Against a confusing backdrop of theoretical conflict and research neglect, what have women been doing? An ever increasing number have returned to school as well as to work. Between the years 1950 and 1966 the proportion of women twenty to thirty-four attending school increased almost fourfold. By the fall of 1967, 2.8 million women of all ages were attending higher educational institutions, ten percent more than in 1966. The trend from the low points of the 1950's and 1960's was for more

women to be going to college as first time entrants, for more older women to be enrolling in college, and for an almost 100% increase of women enrolling in junior colleges. Many of these women tended to be married and to be attending school part-time. Women taking degrees in 1967 were heavily concentrated in the field of education, 38% at the bachelor's level, 51% at the master's level and 29% at the doctoral level (Handbook of Women Workers, 1969).

What was known about the characteristics of older women students? Crosman and Gustav (1966) studied the academic achievement of 457 students over thirty. The older students were quite successful in their college work. Halfter (1962) compared the academic performance of women forty years of age and over with the performance of women eighteen to twenty-five in the same classes at two major universities. The older women achieved better than their younger counterparts in total performance and in each field of study.

When high school achievement was controlled, the older women with average high school achievement did average college work, but those with above average high school achievement performed much better than their younger counterparts of similar high school background. Halfter noted that this self-selected group of older women students might be atypical of the general population, since their educational background was higher than average, and that they might also have had unusual motivation (Halfter, 1962).

Johnstone and Rivera (1965) in their survey of continuing education programs found that women students had more favorable attitudes than men toward taking courses. The continuing education service at The University of Texas at Austin found the returning coed highly motivated and planning to do a good job academically ("Returning to the scene," Orange Notes, 1970).

Osborn (1963) found that many of the older women students' difficulties in returning to college were transitory. Among the transitory problems were: inadequate study techniques, deficient orientation to college, and lack of self-confidence. Occasional problems were the ubiquitous scheduling difficulty, tensions of exams causing increased tensions at home, and sharp curtailment of social activity. Some thirty percent of the women had a value conflict when study activities conflicted with homemaking activities. Doty (1967) studied matched samples of older and younger women students. The older women did not perceive themselves as having more academic difficulties than the younger women, but did mention different problems. They mentioned having difficulty in concentrating, reading rapidly, and in taking effective class notes. However, their study habits were different from younger women students' habits. The older women spent twice as much time studying, studied daily at regular hours, reviewed and outlined materials, began assignments promptly and wrote multiple drafts of papers. In addition, the older women expected superior performance of themselves because they felt their maturity made them better able to recognize the importance of a college education.

Checking the demographic variables of the 221 older women students in her study, Osborn (1963) found that seventy percent were in the upper ten percent of their graduating classes; they participated in three to four extracurricular activities; eighty-three percent had some college before marriage; eighty-seven percent had been married only once; sixty-five percent rated their marriages as happy; forty-one percent of their fathers were in professional or managerial occupations; their mothers were primarily homemakers; their parents' average education was a little over eleven years; seventy-nine percent of their husbands had at least one degree; and eighty-eight percent of their husbands were in professional or managerial occupations. Forty-eight percent of the older women were working full time, and of those, sixty-seven percent were teachers, administrators, and supervisors in the public schools.

In a matched sample investigation of differences between women of age twenty-five to fifty who returned to college and those women the same age who did not, Doty (1966) found that the women students planned to pursue full-time careers, primarily in teaching, while seventy percent of the nonstudents had no career plans; women students participated in more groups and activities than the nonstudents; twice as many students' husbands had attended college and were employed in professional occupations; and the mature women students had significantly more masculine interests than the nonstudents, as measured by the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. Career orientation for women seemed to involve masculine interests or Bardwick's (1971)

internalization of masculine achievement motives which were dominant in the academic education of middle class girls.

What were the reasons these older women students gave for returning to college? The women in the Osborn (1963) study gave the following principle reasons for seeking degrees: personal growth and self-improvement, enjoyment of learning, and desire for professional growth. Other reasons given in descending order of importance were: preparation for teaching, financial security, financial assistance for children, advancement in work, enrichment of everyday living, and preparation for employment other than teaching. Three-fourths of the women were encouraged to go to school by their husbands; two-thirds, by their parents, children and professors; and eighty percent, by their employers.

In Doty's (1966) study of students and nonstudents the mature students gave the following reasons for attending college: eighty percent said to fulfill a desire for knowledge; fifty percent said because of dissatisfaction with club, community and social activities; forty percent gave financial preparation for retirement as a reason; thirty percent mentioned lack of interest in jobs that did not require a college education. Almost a third of the mature students said they had always intended to return to school when they were financially able and their children were of school age. In interpreting the finding that the nonstudents of her study said they did not have the time to attend college, Doty (1966) found them to be characterized by generally lower levels of intellectual activity and motivation to seek intellectual or social stimulation than the student group.

They held more conventional attitudes about the role of women than did the student group. In terms of proximity to colleges, financial capability, husbands' approval, and other variables that would have seemed to be important in choosing to return to college, the two groups did not differ. The author felt that the critical difference was strictly a motivational one.

There seemed to be sufficient evidence that older women students did achieve upon returning to college. Those who achieved at an average level in high school performed at an average level in college; but those who were above average in high school performance, achieved much better than their younger counterparts of equal ability in college. Their attitudes and studying techniques differed from men and from younger women students. A long gap in their educations did not diminish their ability to perform academically. Women returning to school during their mature years were a surprisingly active group, being involved more than their homemaking counterparts in all varieties of activities. Most of them had had some college before their return; and a predominant number of their husbands were well-educated and working in the professions. The data on the educational attainment of their parents was less clear, but the fathers in one study were mostly well-educated and working in the professions. The women gave as their main reasons for returning to college personal growth and enjoyment of learning; but professional growth and financial concerns were mentioned, too. The difficulty with these findings is that the conclusions were based on very few studies, with the exception of the academic performances of

older students. The studies were limited in sample size and constitution. The instruments used were not similar. There was much need for discovering more about the personality characteristics of older women students, if counselors, educators and psychologists were to provide effective help and planning.

Did observers find colleges and universities difficult for women returnees? Raushenbush (1962) found institutional representatives skeptical of women's real intentions in returning to school. She found various obstacles such as refusal to accept transfer credits, physical requirements applied that were meant for teenagers and artificial, arbitrary age limits. A Task Force funded by the Ford Foundation (Report on Higher Education, 1971) reported on the problems in higher education; their opinions about the barriers to women summed up most criticisms. They found three types of obstacles blocking women's full participation: the overt discrimination of faculties, deans, and college officials; institutional barriers such as rigid admission requirements; lack of services which would make education compatible with women's other activities; and assumptions and inhibitions on the part of both men and women which denied the talents of women.

> Although few admissions officers or members of graduate fellowship committees would confess to discrimination on the basis of race, many openly argue that women should be denied opportunities because they are women (Report on Higher Education, 1971).

There were two primary arguments given that women's education was a poor investment: (a) they were less likely to finish their training, and (b) they were less likely to use it if they did.

Facts were found which contradicted these arguments. More women than men completed their undergraduate degrees in four years; women represented about thirty percent of graduate and professional school enrollees and earned thirty-six percent of the undergraduate degrees. The impression that women were less likely to finish their training was often a result of their transfering to other schools when their husbands moved. Women used their training as the amount of training increased; fifty-four percent of the women with bachelor's degrees and seventy-one percent of those with five or more years of higher education were working. The Task Force cited the studies affirming the heavy work participation of women Ph. D.'s.

Other practical hurdles to women's participation in college were mentioned (Report on Higher Education, 1971).

> Residence requirements, the inability to transfer credits, insistence on full-time study, lack of childcare facilities, and inadequate health services. . . . Women are frequently discriminated against in obtaining fellowships and travel grants and such amenities as married-student housing (p. 55).

The most formidable obstacle was seen to be the assumptions of both men and women about women's appropriate role. The report suggests that these assumptions must be examined, and that aiding or fostering changes in role expectations was an appropriate intervention for colleges and universities to make with both men and women students.

Tinker (1965) visited the continuing education programs for women throughout the country and reviewed their commonalities and differences. She found programs ranging from those

for the gifted only to those giving help to all women regardless of prior education. There was great variety in course content, administrative staffing, participants' ages, education, and motivation. Of primary interest were the programs' commonalities: the majority of women were between thirty-five and fifty; most had done some college work but did not have degrees; most were from middle and upper-middle class socioeconomic backgrounds; and most preferred classes from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The continuing education programs were of uniformly strong quality, comparing favorably with undergraduate requirements. Tinker (1965) called for a relaxation of nonessential academic regulations, mentioning particularly the transferability of course credits. She also called for counselor availability especially during the early stress of returning to college. She felt that the styles of education being explored in these programs would be useful to men, too, as our society provides more leisure time for self-enrichment or demands more mid-career changes requiring retraining.

The present study attempted to provide information about the demographic and personality characteristics of a group of older women students who were attending a major state university and were majoring in education. Since a similar body of information was available on younger women student counterparts, it was decided to make use of the younger group as a comparison sample to attempt to discover any special counseling, guidance or curriculum treatments which might be highlighted as appropriate for the older women students.

Method

Subjects

A group of women college students over twenty-five years of age was compared to a group of younger women college students between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two. These students were assembled from women enrolled in a pre-service teacher education program. A four year period from 1968 through 1971 was required to accumulate a large enough sample of older women's protocols for statistical comparisons. Students were assessed as they enrolled in the initial Educational Psychology course of the teacher preparation sequence at The University of Texas at Austin. The comparison sample of younger women was assessed in the same course but during the fall semester of 1968 only. A sample of one hundred and sixty-four older women was compared to a sample of five hundred and nine younger women students.

Instruments

The two sample groups were compared on selected demographic and personality variables. The demographic variables were measured using the Peck Autobiographical Information instrument (BIO) which yielded data about subjects' personal, educational, employment and family background characteristics (Veldman, 1970b). Personality variables were measured using the Bown Self-Report Inventory (SRI) (Bown, 1961; Bown and Veldman, 1967); the Veldman Adjective Self Description instrument (ASD) (Veldman, 1970a, 1971a; Veldman and Parker, 1970); and the Peck One Word Sentence Completion instrument form 62 (OWSC)

(Veldman, 1971b). The ASD assessed the subject's self-reported description of herself from a list of adjectives. These two instruments, the ASD and the SRI, have strong face validity and asked no more of a subject than she cared to reveal. The OWSC, by contrast, was a semi-projective instrument designed to assess covert personality characteristics such as anxiety, hostility and depression.

These instruments were available from the respective authors or the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at The University of Texas at Austin, Texas. They were developed under various research grants:

Mental Health and Teacher Education, NIMH Grant 2M-6635

Personality, Teacher Education and Teaching Behavior Research Project, USOE Grant OE 3-10-032

Computer Analysis of Personality, NIMH Grant 06823.

The full battery was being used in collaborating teacher education institutions throughout the United States. Individual instruments have been employed in many research studies and in institutional counseling programs.

Analyses

The two samples were compared on the selected demographic variables from the BIO using analyses of variance for continuous variables and using Chi-square analyses for the noncontinuous variables. For the personality variables, two way classification (age by level--elementary or secondary level major) analyses of variance were performed on the twenty-two scales of the ASD, SRI and OWSC. A Pearson product moment correlation analysis

was performed between age and the twenty-two scales of the SRI, ASD and OWSC to determine whether the personality variables of this study showed systematic change with age. (A regression analysis was performed to check the assumption of linearity underlying the correlational findings and the assumption was justified.)

For both the demographic and the personality variables of this study, the hypotheses were stated in the null form--that there would be no difference between the older and younger women students. The present state of theory and research did not warrant directional predictions. For the correlational analysis of age and the personality variables, the hypothesis was again stated in the null form--that there would be no personality differences across this age group.

Results

Autobiographical data

Before the comparison variables are presented, some descriptive information about the distributive variable (age) and the marital status of the two samples may help the reader to keep in mind the skewed quality of the older sample's distribution (Tables 1 and 2). Almost half the older sample were under thirty and sixty-eight percent were married. So many of the older women returning to school between the ages of twenty-five and thirty years of age was a finding unique to this study. The divorce rate of this sample of older women was well below the national average, as well.

For the variables appropriate for comparison as shown in

TABLE 1

Age Distribution of Samples

Sample	Ages	Frequencies	Percentages
	18-19	62	12%
Younger	20	279	55%
Subjects	21	146	29%
	22	22	4%
	25-26	41	25%
Older	27-30	36	22%
Subjects	31-36	49	31%
	37-56	38	22%

Distribution variable comparison not appropriate.

TABLE 2

Marital Status of Samples

Marital Status	Percentage Younger	Percentage Older
Single	78%	12%
Engaged	10%	1%
Married	12%	68%
Divorced	---	13%
Separated	---	3%
Widowed	---	3%

Sample not statistically compared.

Table 3, the older subjects were significantly heavier in weight than the younger subjects but showed no difference on height or physical disabilities mentioned. One would expect older women to have had more health difficulties than younger women, but surprisingly these older subjects reported no more than the younger subjects. The older subjects' mean weight is well below the national average for their age distribution, and to the extent that slenderness correlates with better health, may support a picture of a robust, energetic group of older students.

Fathers, mothers and siblings of the younger sample averaged more education than did the older sample's family members (Table 3). The younger subjects' fathers were reported working at higher occupation levels than the older subjects' fathers (Table 4). More of the older subjects' mothers had worked, but the mothers of the younger subjects who had worked, had worked at slightly higher occupation levels (Table 5). This trend might mean that the older subjects were from slightly lower socioeconomic status families, or it might represent a general broadening of the population into a larger middle class during the years which this study spans. Older subjects came from larger families and by inference from their smaller high school classes, smaller home towns (Table 3). Judged by the occupational and educational status measures, the older subjects' spouses were of higher socioeconomic status (Tables 6 and 7) than these subjects' fathers had been. This may again reflect the broadening of the numerical base of the middle

Table 3

Analysis of Variance for Demographic Variables

Variable	Mean for Younger	Mean for Older	F Value	p
Weight	121.50	127.80	22.24	<.0000**
Height	64.95	64.95	.08	NS
Respiratory Ills	.13	.11	.43	NS
Other Ills	1.08	1.10	.02	NS
Father's Education	5.06	4.28	16.56	.0002**
Father's Interests	2.32	2.09	2.31	NS
Mother's Education	4.53	3.76	26.44	<.0000**
Mother's Interests	2.18	2.11	.19	NS
Number Siblings	1.91	2.18	4.35	.0350*
Sibling's Education	5.19	4.76	13.15	.0006**
High School Size	3.91	2.85	69.30	<.0000**
H.S. Activities	5.65	3.26	117.48	<.0000**
College GPA	3.77	4.38	33.43	<.0000**
College Activities	2.19	1.74	5.63	.0169*

* $p \leq .05$
** $p \leq .01$

TABLE 4

Fathers' Occupations in Percentages of Samples Responding

Number Responding	Top Executive	Profes-sional	White Collar	Blue Collar	Unskilled
N = 487 or 96% of Younger Sample	14%	46%	23%	14%	3%
N = 143 or 87% of Older Sample	14%	35%	17%	25%	9%

Chi square = 21.87, 4 df, p .01

TABLE 5

Mothers' Occupations in Percentages of Samples Responding

Number Responding	Executive or Professional	White or Blue Collar	Service or Unskilled	House-wives
N = 470 or 92% of Younger Sample	33%	27%	6%	33%
N = 109 or 66% of Older Sample	35%	38%	11%	16%

Chi square = 14.30, 3 df, p .01

TABLE 6

Spouse or Fiance's Education Level

Education Level	Percentage Younger	Percentage Older
Blanks	78%	23%
Grades 9-11	---	---
High School	---	4%
1 year college	---	4%
1 or 2 years college	6%	6%
Bachelor's degree	11%	24%
Post B. A.	3%	27%
Ph. D.	---	12%

Samples not statistically compared.

TABLE 7

Spouse or Fiance's Occupation Level

Occupation Level	Percentage Younger	Percentage Older
Blanks	86%	27%
Unskilled	---	---
Blue Collar	2%	3%
White Collar	7%	10%
Professional	4%	46%
Top Executive	---	15%

Samples statistically not compared.

class. However, this finding is consistent with Osborn's (1963) study in which her subjects married husbands of higher socioeconomic status than their family of rearing. If the emotional support of the husbands was the most critical variable in women's returning to school as it has been found in other studies (Bardwick, 1971), these husbands would seem to be in a position to be unthreatened by their wives' potential attainment and may well have encouraged it as did the husbands of Osborn's study (1963).

High school grades were not significantly different for the samples. Both groups were predominantly A and B students and ranked overwhelmingly in the first quarter of their high school classes. The older group reported significantly higher college GPA's than the younger group (Table 3). This finding agreed with several other studies (Halfter, 1962; Crosman and Gustav, 1966; Osborn, 1963; and Doty, 1966 and 1967).

Personality data

On several scales of the SRI (Table 8) the elementary level group expressed more positive attitudes than did the secondary level majors, a finding consistent with the generally more positive responses of elementary level majors compared to secondary level majors as found in several studies with this instrument (Bown and Veldman, 1967; Fuller, Peck, Bown, Menaker, White and Veldman, 1968). Including the group of older women in the analysis did not alter this tendency toward a more positive attitude among elementary level majors.

Table 8

Double Classification (Age by Level) Analysis of Variance Comparison of the Self-Report Inventory Scale Means

SRI Scales	Age Means		F Value	Probability
	Older	Younger		
Self	20.22	19.76	1.62	NS
Others	19.27	20.54	19.01	.0001**
Children	10.65	19.39	.37	NS
Authority	18.51	18.68	.30	NS
Work	17.93	16.26	19.79	.0001**
Reality	16.63	16.15	3.08	NS
Parents	17.71	19.07	6.61	.0101**
Hope	19.74	20.28	3.00	NS
	N = 142	N = 470		

	Level Means		F Value	Probability
	Elementary	Secondary		
Self	20.51	19.47	8.44	.0041**
Others	20.33	19.48	8.56	.0039**
Children	21.61	17.51	104.43	<.0000**
Authority	18.80	18.39	1.74	NS
Work	17.18	17.02	.17	NS
Reality	16.68	16.20	2.05	NS
Parents	18.92	17.86	3.94	.0447*
Hope	20.79	19.23	24.75	<.0000**
	N = 212	N = 400		

* $p \leq .05$
** $p \leq .01$

Looking at the attitudes of the younger and older groups on the SRI, the younger group reported more positive attitudes toward Others (peers) and Parents than did the older group. The less positive attitudes of older subjects toward parents was reminiscent of Cox's subjects (1970) who were found to be more critical of their parents in their mid-thirties than earlier. The older subjects reported significantly more positive attitudes toward work. This attitude may be reflected in their higher college GPA as well. It may also be reflected in the differences between the groups' plans for the future. Fifty percent of the older group said they planned to teach, sixteen percent planned more education and eleven percent mentioned other work, while the attention of the younger women was focused on marriage and children as their future plans.

The interaction of age by level on the Self scale of the SRI (Table 9) qualifies the main effect difference. The older women split to the extremes. Perhaps choosing to work with younger children represents a cheerful, mature self-regard or perhaps it represents a softer, more vulnerable personality. The confidence required to assume authority over young children, as opposed to adolescents, may indicate a tougher personality style among those choosing to work with the older students in public schools.

On the ASD, elementary level majors (Table 10) reported themselves as warmer and more considerate than secondary level majors on the Attitude scale and as more courteous and conventional in social behavior on the Behavior scale. Veldman

Table 9

Age by Level Interactions (SRI)

	Means					
	Older Elementary	Older Secondary	Younger Elementary	Younger Secondary	F Value	Probability
Self	21.16	19.38	19.87	19.65	5.33	.0200*
Other	19.67	18.87	21.00	20.09	.04	NS
Children	21.54	17.73	21.68	17.10	.88	NS
Authority	18.63	18.38	18.96	18.39	.26	NS
Work	18.35	17.51	16.00	16.53	3.31	NS
Reality	17.07	16.39	16.29	16.02	.39	NS
Parents	18.04	17.38	19.80	18.35	.56	NS
Hope	20.54	18.94	21.04	19.53	.02	NS
	N = 58	N = 84	N = 154	N = 316		

* p .05
** p .01

Table 10

Double Classification (Age by Level) Analysis of Variance Comparison of the Adjective Self-Description Scale Means

ASD Scales	Age Means		F Value	Probability
	Older	Younger		
Attitude	33.79	34.66	4.27	.0369*
Behavior	12.07	13.56	12.88	.0007**
Efficiency	31.46	31.10	.51	NS
Orientation	21.13	21.25	.03	NS
Anxiety	21.41	24.45	24.65	<.0000**
Ideology	27.64	27.65	.00	NS
Attractiveness	24.25	25.86	12.61	.0007**
	N = 142	N = 470		

	Level Means		F Value	Probability
	Elementary	Secondary		
Attitude	35.02	33.43	14.19	.0004**
Behavior	12.40	13.23	4.00	.0432*
Efficiency	31.37	31.18	.15	NS
Orientation	20.56	21.81	3.46	NS
Anxiety	22.48	23.39	2.22	NS
Ideology	27.47	27.82	.66	NS
Attractiveness	25.41	24.70	2.50	NS
	N = 142	N = 470		

* $p \leq .05$
** $p \leq .01$

(1970a) reported a similar significant difference in a large pooled sample of younger students, and including older subjects did not alter this effect.

Looking at the attitudes of the younger and older groups on the ASD, the younger group reported themselves as warmer and more socially concerned on the Attitude scale than did the older group. This tendency seems to be consistent for younger people to report themselves as feeling relatively warmer than adults in the same occupational groupings (Veldman, 1971a). However, the younger group report themselves as behaving more abrasively and inconsiderately toward other people than did the older group on the Behavior scale. This trend is also reported by other student and professional group studies (Veldman, 1971a). To feel warm and considerate while simultaneously reporting behaving impulsively and inconsiderately toward people may be a poignant self-portrait of the awkwardness and frustration of adolescence. Perhaps the older subjects have achieved some inner equanimity with increased age, feeling less self-effacing concern for peers but behaving more cordially in ways which make life less troublesome. The two self-portraits may represent the transition from the anxiety-to-please of adolescence to the more self-directed assurance of maturity.

On the ASD, the older group felt significantly less attractive than the younger students. This difference may be interpreted as the effect of cultural attitudes toward aging, acting upon the older subjects' self-concepts. Since this feeling of lack of attractiveness was not accompanied by increased

anxiety, however, it may be that role changes of marriage and motherhood may have brought lessened concern with appearance or brought more candor in their personal assessment. The older women reported feeling less overt anxiety on the ASD scale, but this result was qualified by an interaction with level (Table 11), e.g., the secondary majors ranked in the middle and the elementary majors split to the extreme score positions. The equanimity of the older elementary major reemerges. It is worth noting that all of these anxiety scores are below the level at which anxiety would be clinically interpreted as indicating emotional stress. These subjects would all be normal, low-anxious by that criteria.

On the semi-projective OWSC (Table 12), taking the number of characters per word as a gross measure of verbal fluency, the younger elementary majors used the longest words and the older elementary the shortest, as measured in Response Length. The older elementary majors responded with the least verbal fluency as measured by their larger number of Repetitions and relatively high use of Populars as well. This suggests more emotional response tendencies among this older group, as opposed to intellectual response tendencies. Since the younger group of this study was part of the normative group for the definition of Populars, it is reasonable that they used more Populars and makes comparison on this scale of dubious validity. The older women's overall higher usage of Repetitions may represent a shift toward intellectual stereotypy or may reflect a narrower life focus, not as intellectually oriented as that of the

Table 11

Age by Level Interactions (ASD)

	Means					
	Older Elementary	Older Secondary	Younger Elementary	Younger Secondary	F Value	Probability
Attitude	34.67	32.91	35.36	33.95	.16	NS
Behavior	11.56	12.59	13.25	13.88	.22	NS
Efficiency	31.56	31.35	31.19	31.01	.00	NS
Orientation	20.39	21.87	20.73	21.76	.11	NS
Anxiety	20.18	22.65	24.77	24.13	6.46	.0109**
Ideology	27.05	28.22	27.88	27.42	3.41	NS
Attractiveness	24.49	24.01	26.34	25.38	.28	NS
	N = 58	N = 84	N = 154	N = 316		

* p≤.05
** p≤.01

Table 12

Double Classification (Age by Level) Analysis of Variance Comparison of the One Word Sentence Completion Scale Means

OWSC Scales	Age Means		F Value	Probability
	Older	Younger		
Response Length	6.54	6.62	2.33	NS
Repetitions	10.89	9.47	12.69	.0007**
Populars	18.19	19.72	11.36	.0012**
Evasions	2.04	1.93	.18	NS
Hostility	1.24	1.92	16.84	.0002**
Anxiety	1.37	2.12	23.43	<.0000**
Depression	1.80	2.25	5.92	.0145**
	N = 142	N = 470		

	Level Means		F Value	Probability
	Elementary	Secondary		
Response Length	6.59	6.58	.03	NS
Repetitions	10.04	10.32	.50	NS
Populars	19.14	18.77	.68	NS
Evasions	1.74	2.22	3.31	NS
Hostility	1.43	1.73	3.22	NS
Anxiety	1.71	1.78	.18	NS
Depression	1.92	2.13	1.27	NS
	N = 142	N = 470		

* $p \leq .05$
** $p \leq .01$

younger group still caught up in the broader demands of college activities.

The critically important finding of the comparisons on the OWSC were the less hostile and anxious responses of the older subjects. The older subjects also showed less depressive responses, but this is qualified by an interaction effect (Table 13). On the interaction the elementary level majors split to the extremes again, leaving the older elementary the least depressive and the two secondary groups much alike.

What adds further significance to the findings of differences between the groups on anxiety, hostility and depression on the OWSC and for anxiety on the ASD is that each of these group differences is repeated as a trend across the older sample of this study. The decrease in negative affect indicators continues as age increases for the 164 older women students of this study (Table 14). Here, too, in the correlational analysis we find a highly significant increase in positive attitude toward Work as defined as intrinsic reward on the SRI.

Some kind of personal equanimity seems to appear concomitantly with age as measured by the negative affect indicators of these personality instruments, and concurrently a more positive attitude toward Work emerges.

Discussion

The older women students of this study might be characterized as more focused on work and education; more productive in terms of higher academic performance; and less anxious, hostile

Table 13

Age by Level Interactions (OWSC)

	Means				F Value	Probability
	Older Elementary	Older Secondary	Younger Elementary	Younger Secondary		
Response Length	6.49	6.60	6.68	6.56	5.40	.0193*
Repetitions	11.02	10.77	9.06	9.88	1.79	NS
Populars	18.77	17.62	19.52	19.92	2.94	NS
Evasions	1.80	2.27	1.68	2.17	.00	NS
Hostility	1.11	1.37	1.75	2.09	.04	NS
Anxiety	1.25	1.48	2.17	2.08	1.11	NS
Depression	1.50	2.10	2.34	2.16	4.49	.0324*
	N = 58	N = 84	N = 154	N - 316		

* $p \leq .05$
** $p \leq .01$

Table 14

Correlation of Older Group's Age with Self-report Scales and Semi-projective Scales

Intrument		Scale	R	Probability
Self-Report Inventory (SRI) N - 157	1.	Self	.03	NS
	2.	Other	-.10	NS
	3.	Children	.07	NS
	4.	Authority	.06	NS
	5.	Work	.23**	.01
	6.	Reality	.12	NS
	7.	Parents	.07	NS
	8.	Hope	-.02	NS
Adjective Self-Description (ASD) N = 161	1.	Attitude	-.05	NS
	2.	Behavior	-.13	NS
	3.	Efficiency	.07	NS
	4.	Orientation	.10	NS
	5.	Anxiety	-.16*	.05
	6.	Ideology	-.04	NS
	7.	Attractiveness	-.08	NS
One Word Sentence Completion (OWSC) N - 155	1.	Response length	-.08	NS
	2.	Repetitions	.03	NS
	3.	Populars	-.14	NS
	4.	Evasion	-.06	NS
	5.	Hostility	-.16*	.05
	6.	Anxiety	-.16*	.05
	7.	Depression	-.18*	.05

* p .05
** p .01

Significance levels for r values taken from Appendix E, Young and Veldman (1965).

and depressed when compared with their younger student counterparts. The picture of the older women students emerging from this study is a picture which contradicts the stereotype of the older woman student as frustrated, directionless, maladjusted and uncommitted. To fully evaluate the dimension of commitment to education, career and achievement, a follow-up study would be needed to determine if older women are more likely to pursue graduate training and more likely to enter and remain employed in their career field.

A critical question raised by this study was whether these older women would perform better as professional teachers once they were in their own classrooms. While some quality seems operative in making them better and apparently more comfortable students when they return to college, it would be most valuable to discover if the emotional equanimity of these older women would enhance their emotional interactions with their prospective pupils. If this proved positive, then they would be deserving not only of special considerations and encouragement upon college enrollment, but of being actively recruited into teacher training programs.

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